Spoiling a Romance

By CLAUDE FAMARES

The broker's private secretary looked up in astonishment as the gray haired old broker, who was frigidity itself, hailed the visitor with:

"Well, well, Tom, but where the devil did you spring from this morning?"

And Tom, who appeared to be fully as old and frigid and gray haired as the other, replied:

"Say, Jim, it's good for sore eyes to see you. The G. and S. road wants a thousand new freight cars, and I'm in the east to raise a loan. How are you, anyhow? Feeling pretty gay, old boy?"

And then the broker and the general manager sat down for a chat over old days at college and talked of this and that for an hour before the broker said:

"By the way, Tom, I've got a boy out on your road."

"You don't say! He hasn't been near me with a letter."

"But he's there. You remember my boy Dave? Always fussing around with machinery since he was a kid. I wanted to make a broker of him, but a couple of years ago, after going through the Polytechnic against my wishes, he threw me over. He wanted to go railroading, and I wanted him here and so we had a falling out."

"You don't say?"

"I didn't drive him from the house, but he left just the same. Said he was going to make his own fortune and all that bosh. Hasn't had a cent of his income from me in over a year. He writes to his mother, but I never hear direct from him. Got brains, I think, but he's self willed and inclined to be an ass."

"Don't be too hard on him. If it isn't his way to skin the lambs, let him try some other. I believe you used to be known as 'Old Obstinacy' once upon a time."

"Yes, I remember. If you happen to come across the boy and he deserves a lift, give it to him. No petting or pampering, though. Let him have all the roughing it he wants."

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Away out west on the G. and S. railroad there was a young man of twenty-two working as fireman on an engine drawing a local. Two years before when he had applied to the superintendent of motive power for something to do the "super" had looked him over in contempt on account of his white hands and patent leather shoes and replied:

"Want work, eh? Well, I'll give it to you. Go up to the roundhouse and tell Sam to set you to work as a wiper. The pay will be $26 per month, and if you get grease spots on that dandy suit of yours the company won't pay for the cleaning."

The official turned away with a grin, thinking that that was the last of the young man, but he was mistaken. When three days had passed the boss of the roundhouse reported:

"Jay, you sent me a Jim Dandy of a wiper. Hanged if he don't seem to know something about machinery."

"What, did the young fellow show up?" asked the "super" in surprise.

"Been working right along, and he's the handiest chap I've had since my time here. You'll be promoting him out of the house in a month."

The young man was watched closely and kept track of. He had been put at the very dirtiest work and given the poorest pay, but he made no complaints. His time came when an engine was telephoned for in a hurry and there was nobody to run her out of the house and up the yard. He stepped into the cab and had the table turned for him and turned the engine over without comment. He was going back to his work when the superintendent asked:

"Did you ever fire an engine?"

"No, sir."

"Think you could?"

"I'm ready to give it a trial."

Two weeks later he was put on a yard engine. The engineer meant to find fault with him because he was a "dandy," but no opportunity occurred. He was kept in his place for six months, as there were many to be promoted in advance of him, but he was finally given a place on the local. When this engineer was asked to report on his "cub" he said:

"He's a peach in his way, but I dunno how he'll pan out in the end. He's one of these book engineers. He thinks he could take an engine to pieces and set her up again by the books, and I'm lookin' to see his head get swelled until the road has to bounce him."

Things were in this shape when the general manager returned from New York. He had forgotten about David Holmes for the moment. He wanted to go down the road for a few miles, and so he took the local.

He was accompanied by his daughter Nettie, but not in the car. It was said of this piquant girl of eighteen years that she ran the G. and S. road by running her father. She wanted to go down on the engine, and she had her way about it, and the meeting between her and "the handsome fireman," as Dave was called, had consequences. He had on his jumper and was grimy, but she saw beyond that. Her heart was beating faster before she had been in the cab five minutes.

During the next month that cab ride was repeated three or four times on one excuse and another, but the engineer grinned and said nothing. What might be called a clandestine correspondence followed. Perhaps there were clandestine meetings in the park when Dave had his days off. The very fact that an employee of a railroad dares to fall in love with the daughter of the general manager is a clandestine act.

The general manager had not yet hunted up the son of his old friend, being busy about those new cars and having to smooth down the backs of several directors who believed that the road was going into bankruptcy, when the motive power department promoted the fireman to be engineer and gave him a local of more importance.

It can't be said that Dave and Nettie were waiting for this thing to happen that something else might be brought about, but they were not long in taking advantage of it. The silly young couple planned an elopement.

It was given away by Miss Nettie's maid, and the general manager laid his little plans accordingly. The girl and her maid were allowed to depart for Royalston in the cab of Dave's engine, and at the first stop the G. M. left the passenger car in which he had been ensconced and appeared in the cab.

The way the maid shrieked out, added to the way the daughter turned pale and the engineer turned red, were sufficient evidence of guilt. The G. M. meant to be an avenging father. He meant to compel his daughter to faint away with remorse and the engineer to drop on his knees and beg pardon for living until he could reach the next station and get off his engine. In fact, the G. M. had a gun with him, and there is never any telling what a man who don't know the muzzle of a revolver from the butt may do when he gets to playing heroics.

"Young lady!"— he had begun in his sternest tones, when Dave interrupted to take all the blame. While he was taking it he gave his name and spoke of his father.

"Then—then you are David Holmes?" asked the G. M. as he put up his gun.

"I can identify myself satisfactorily, sir."

"Then why in the devil haven't you done so long ago?"

"I wanted to succeed by my own efforts, and I think I have done fairly well."

"Y-e-s, I think you have," said the official as he looked at his daughter with a grim smile on his face.

"Father, Dave has invented a new fire box for engines, and it's bound to be a great success," said Nettie, with an appealing look.

"And is this eloping in an engine cab one of his inventions as well?"

"And, papa, dear, he has invented a new kind of frog—one you can't get your foot fast in and be run down—and he's got a jack by which one man can lift five tons, and you don't know how much coal and oil and labor he's going to save. He's one of the brightest and smartest and dearest"—

"That will do for just now," interrupted the father as he laid a hand on her arm. "Young man, do you think you could find my house if you tried very hard?"

"I do, sir," replied Dave.

"Then I will get off at the next station with the girls and be looking for you tomorrow evening. I believe you have the evening off. I want to talk with you about these new fire boxes, frogs, jacks and elopements."

Dave found the house without going far astray, and there was a conversation. The waybills of the G. and S. road don't show whether the couple had to wait three months or six, but they referred to David Holmes a year later as a division superintendent, and he did not stop there. When the marriage took place the father's face wore a smile as he kissed the bride, but the bride pouted and said:

"Now, papa, how mean of you to spoil our romance and make us get married in this stupid and old fashioned way!"

How the Mikado Gives Thanks.

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rate candle frames of gold and silver there are none, nor the heavy smokes of incense. But the soft fragrance as it waves out uncertainly from pillars and posts and floorings of unstained cedar, smoothed and polished under skillful slide of joiner's plane until they shine out of their own beauty, more beautiful than hard coats of paints and varnish—how agreeable! And as you watch those ancient lamps burn in serene steadiness you imagine you are standing in the hovering presence of unseen gods.

But here comes the master officer, with strange hat and in strange costume. He proceeds to the altar in measured steps, and there follow after him a train of underofficers holding up to the eye's level wooden trays of strange make, each heavy with a pile of first gatherings of the season. In this tray there is a heap of first grains of rice from the imperial field, where the emperor himself sowed the seed in early summer, and in that pair of earthen bottles the sweet liquor of sake, the first brewed of the harvest of Ise. Tray after tray the master officer receives the first productions of land and water, the feathered traveler of air and finned visitors of sea, and in hushed silence he places them on different steps in due order. The offerings are now on the altar. The officers take their seats in single rows on both sides of the center mattings. Hark the rustling sound! There comes the emperor. Attired in his ancient costume of state, the majestic form advances slowly to the altar. Ho; he stops! Hush; he takes a parchment roll! "Ware Kashi-Komi Kashi-Komi Maosaku"—In dread adoration. Oh, fathers in heaven, we come to pray. As an awful stillness falls around, the clear, vibrant voice goes on extolling the virtues and greatness of heaven and heaven made ancestors, and flows on thanking for the unerring return of the joyful season of harvest and plenty, and rises higher, invoking their undiminished aid and protection that the imperial house may reign over the loyal people and rejoice with them in the goodness of divine power into eternity. The end is reached, and with an impressive clap of hand, twice repeated, he seals the prayer, and the imperial figure moves out in the same august stateliness.

The sun is up, and as its first rays strike the royal chrysanthemums, embroidered in gold, against the purple ground flapping over the imperial gateway the whole of Japan awakes in joy. —Montreal Star.

Safe.

A New York man was stopping for a month at an inland town in Florida. This man is exceedingly fond of swimming, but has a horror of snakes, and this fear kept him from indulging in his favorite sport in the nearby river. He was fishing one day and mentioned his desire and the barrier to its enjoyment to his guide, a lanky and sorrowful "cracker."

"Oh, I kin fix yo' all up all right," the guide drawled and led the way to a beautiful little lake some distance back from the river. "Ain't nary snake in hyah," he said.

The northerner enjoyed a half hour's sport in the clear water and then, coming back to the white sand beach, began to dress. He then observed that what he had taken to be logs floating upon the water were in motion.

"Wonder what causes those logs to move?" he said.

"Them ain't logs," his guide calmly replied, chewing on a straw; "them's gators. That's how come there ain't no snakes in hyah—gators keeps 'em et up."—Harper's Weekly.

Right Handed.

It has been observed that infants who crawl on all fours make much more use of the right than the left hand unless they are left handed. A scientist accounts for this by declaring that right handedness is caused by the location of the organs of the body. The heart being on the left side causes very much greater weight than in the right. During active life the heart and arteries filled with blood make the increased weight of that side an item of some importance. The center of gravity is therefore thrown more to the left side. This being the case, the right arm is much more free than the left. There may be also a provision of nature in the use of the right hand more than the left. Throwing a ball, striking with a hammer or other violent exercise might have a depressing or injurious effect upon the heart if done with the left hand.

A Canton Clock.

The famous clepsydra or watch clock of Canton is housed in a temple on the city walls. Three big earthen jars on successive shelves and a fourth and lowest one with a wooden cover constitute the whole clepsydra. The water descends by slow drops from one jar to another, the brass scale on a float in the last jar telling the hours as it rises. Every afternoon at 5 o'clock since 1321 A. D. the lowest jar has been emptied, the upper one filled and the clock thus wound up for another day.

A Dilemma.

"Then, Maurizio, tomorrow I will come with my wife to see you both."

"Deil hitch! But look here. Tell your wife not to wear her new diamond earrings or my wife will at once want a pair."

"Oh, the mischief! And my wife was only coming for the purpose of showing them off."—Il Diavolo Rosa.

It Couldn't Be.

Dean Farrar quotes Tennyson as having related to him the remark of a farmer who, after hearing a fire and brimstone sermon from an old style preacher, consoled his wife by saying: "Never mind, Sally, that must be wrong. No constitooshun couldn't stand it."